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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on September 6, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

- [1A.](#) "In Response to the Statements by the Secretary General of the Arab League" (Al-Adala, affiliated with SCIRI, published a page-four column by Dr. Raghad Ali about the Arab world's concerns over the Iraqi constitution)

"The media is rife with reports of the Arab League Secretary General's, Amr Musa, concerns over the Iraqi constitution article that states Arabs in Iraq are part of the Arab nation. In fact, the Arab League has the right to its opinion concerning Iraq because Iraq is a founding member of the Arab League. Amr Musa opposes that article perhaps because he wants to utter his own point of view. However, we are surprised to see the Arab League suddenly show concern over Iraqi affairs. The Arab League should have apologized to the Iraqi people because its attitudes toward them have been disappointing.

"The Arab League should have, at the very least, condemned what is happening in Iraq rather than insisting on Arabism. Arabism is no more than a hollow word in Arab constitutions. That Arabism has paid no attention to Saddam's crimes and the current terror in Iraq. The Arab League has not condemned terrorist attacks that have killed innocent Iraqis while at the same time it has kept sending condemnations over the killing of Palestinians. Does the Arab League regard other Arab children as innocent while Iraqi children as traitors? I do not know why the Arab League does not show its readiness to assist Iraq in its current disastrous conditions; the Arab League should help us because we are brothers in Arabism. But I think that we are brothers, at least in theory, because Arab leaders care about bombastic slogans and words. History reveals that the Arabism Amr Musa wants for Iraq is the same Arabism that supports all types of tyranny and represents the terror of the former regime. In addition, it is the same Arabism that is represented in Arab media outlets, distorts facts, publicly provokes sectarianism, and labels terrorism `true resistance.'"

- [1B.](#) "The Constitution and the Last Chance" (Al-Fourat, independent, anti coalition, published a page-two editorial by Majed Fadhel Al-Zaboon on the Iraqi constitution)

"I think that there is enough time to work out the disagreements among political parties. We can reach a solution to the crisis (between those who accept the draft constitution and those who reject it) so that they can negotiate and come to a consensus which can be unanimously accepted by the majority in the upcoming referendum. It is very important to reach agreement lest we begin again from zero. The approval of the draft constitution by a minority will create new obstacles in the political process and that is why we should work hard to unify. We must make use of the next few days and weeks to make the political and constitutional process successful so it's approved by the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people."

- [1C.](#) "About Constitutional Education" (Ismaeel Zayyer wrote this front-page editorial in the independent Al-Sabah al-Jadeed)

"Recently, we started hearing political experts say that the Iraqi people do not understand anything about the constitution they'll vote on in the upcoming referendum. Their evidence is either slick or represents their ignorance and tendency to generalize. Moreover, if there were evidence countering theirs they would use techniques and linguistic maneuvers to avoid embarrassment. If we examine the educational process for the Iraqi people we can conclude that there are daily programs on satellite TV channels that deal with the constitution as well as discussions, symposia, workshops and detailed written information chronicled in print.

"Some newspapers allocate one or two pages just for the constitution and one can easily see the posters and billboards that deal with the constitution, explain it, or urge people to participate in the voting. We might need to thank the United Nations for their efforts in disseminating the constitution's principles to the people and also the Supreme Independent Committee. Actually, there are some people who only want us to see the negative so we need to make clear our calls to our people and encourage them to become more aware of allegations in the media. The frightening thing is that negative campaigning may end up forcing people to boycott the election."

[D.](#) "How to Promote Science in the Draft Constitution" (Sarhan Mehna wrote this editorial, on page 25, for the pro-coalition Al-Sabah)

"It is essential for any constitution to be based on science as well as societal norms, history, religion, economic resources and the potential of humanity.

"It is quite clear in the draft constitution that a referendum is set for October 15th. Article 35 deals mostly with science and specifically science education, while the third section holds the government responsible by asserting, 'Scientific research is encouraged for peaceful purposes to serve humanity, embrace creativity, evolution and all aspects of aptitude.' This implies a huge responsibility to promote the, dilapidated, state of education in our country.

"The expression 'scientific research is encouraged for peaceful purposes' would never enable Iraq to make any traditional weapons to defend its borders. It will be forced to be armed completely with foreign weapons despite the capabilities of scientists who have studied, trained, and produced a lot of traditional weapons that are not banned internationally. This constitutional article might limit a lot of useful scientific research in the future, under the pretext of dual usage, as was the case in Saddam's time when some materials were banned while the country was under embargo.

"The expression 'to serve humanity' in the same article would give us the chance to conclude that scientific research in Iraq would be limited and would contribute to helping foreigners before helping the people of this country first. Therefore the first part of article three should be formulated as follows: 'The country encourages scientific research for peaceful and conventional defensive purposes that are not banned internationally and in a manner that will promote Iraq and serve humanity.'

"The last part of the article will ensure benefit from past research. A lot of time and money were spent in Saddam's era and just because he dominated people doesn't mean we should have to sacrifice our expertise through a draft constitution that is difficult to change. The first responsibility of government is to organize and establish disciplined rules about education across the spectrum; it's actually no development without knowledge and no knowledge without education."
Khalilzad